

BELTSVILLE, MD – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD), U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, and Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) visited the Beltsville Agriculture Research Center (BARC) on Monday, September 10, to tour the BARC complex and receive briefings by researchers on projects underway at the world-class facility.

“Over the decades, BARC has grown into the largest and most diversified agricultural research complex in the world. The work undertaken here provides critical information to develop solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority, from nutrition and food safety to sustaining a competitive farm economy,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “I was pleased Secretary Johanns was able to join Senator Cardin and me on this highly informative tour, which underscored how vital BARC is to so many of our nation’s most critical interests.”

During the tour, Congressman Hoyer, Senator Cardin, and Secretary Johanns stopped at two laboratories to learn about critical BARC research aimed at confronting the growing problem of soybean rust and BARC’s pivotal role in securing our nation and its economy through the monitoring and identification of and protection against harmful invasive species. The three also visited a dairy barn housing transgenic cows, which are serving to develop preventative therapies for bovine bacterial infections that result in the loss of milk production. The tour ended steps away from a bee hive, where a talk was given on BARC’s role in tackling Colony Collapse Disorder, which has led to a reduction in the number of feral (wild) honeybees in the U.S.

“Agricultural research has helped place America's farmers head and shoulders above all others in the world,” said Secretary Johanns. “USDA's Beltsville researchers have brought that practical know-how to the skilled hands of the American farmer. In quality of food and efficiency of production, USDA research has advanced more resilient crops and reliable results for the benefit of the world.”

“BARC scientists are on the front-line in protecting American agriculture from imported pests, developing new products and environmental programs, and improving human nutrition,” said Senator Cardin. “This is world-class science leading the way in dozens of areas that are important to the American people, and I am proud that the work is taking place right here in Prince George’s County.”

The Beltsville Agricultural Research Center is the flagship of the Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Research Service, and is world-renowned for its plant, animal, and nutrition research capabilities. This research provides information to ensure that our food is safe and of high

quality, to assess the nutritional needs of Americans, to sustain a competitive agricultural economy, to enhance the natural resource base and the environment, and to provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities and the nation.

Over the years, Rep. Hoyer has helped secure over \$138 million for renovation and modernization of BARC facilities helping to bolster the abilities of the scientists, researchers, and support staff at BARC and to protect the almost 6,500 acres of forest and farmland on BARC property.

“We are proud of BARC and its role as the premier agricultural research facility, not just in the county, but in the world,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “I look forward to working with the Secretary to see that the vital work being done here continues.”

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